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The present short narrative report is a sequel to the more extensive introductory progress report of 1963-1964 (RC 003 073). Emphasis is placed on the increased number of case referrals and on better communication channels evidenced within the program. The inservice program with the dormitory counselors is shown to have been successful but greatly dependent on the personnel involved. Evaluation and research efforts are indicated and explanations of further efforts in this area are reported. (DK)

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PROGRESS REPORT

NIMH Grant 00843-03

Psycho-Social Adjustment

In An

Indian Boarding School

September 1, 1964 -- August 31, 1965

New Mexico Highlands University

November 20, 1965

RC003321

PROJECT STAFF

Regular Staff

Greene, Joel E., Ph. D.	Experimental Psychologist Project Director	40% of time
Saslow, Harry L., Ph. D.	Child-Clinical Psychologist Project Co-Director	Full time
Harrover, May J., ACSW	Psychiatric Social Worker Project Associate	Full time
Blake, Henry W., M. D.	Consulting Psychiatrist	12 visits
Sears, William H., M. D.	Consulting Psychiatrist	4 visits

Visiting Consultants

Apperson, Louise B., Ph. D.	Clinical Psychology Service Department of Psychiatry and Neurology Fitzsimons General Hospital Colorado
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Gladwin, Tom, Ph.D.	Social Science Consultant Community Research and Services Branch
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INTRODUCTION

The project team was engaged in much the same general types of activities during the present period as it was during the period covered by the first report.* Nonetheless, there was a distinct change in the character and flavor of the activities of the project staff which may be attributed to a sense of greater acceptance and comfort in the relationship between the school and the project. There was also a greater appreciation and respect for the activities and responsibilities of the other.

Much less time was spent in building rapport, dispelling apprehensions about the project, interpreting the project's aims, etc. to the staff. Contacts with school staff tended to deal much more directly with problems of one sort or another, and it was possible to make suggestions openly to staff persons as well as to raise questions. Activity was concentrated with those segments of the school with which there had already been interaction, though all inquiries were responded to regardless of their origination. The change then, may be characterized as the difference between "getting acquainted" and working together toward goals now perceived as being compatible if not fully common.

Lines of communication became much more direct with the result that prompt action could be taken when indicated. Referrals could be made directly to the project staff, and, conversely, the project team felt free to contact any relevant source of information within the school.

Allusion can be made to a number of instances that illustrate the cooperative endeavors which were undertaken. One of the supervisory aides taped some of his interviews and counseling sessions with students. One of the project staff reviewed them and made suggestions. There were several occasions during the past year in which project staff was asked to be present while an aide talked with some of the students. By being able to make observations of the student-staff interactions, it was possible to make on the spot comments.

In order to give examples in greater detail of some of the more important developments of the project during the year, there follow separate discussions on in-service training, referrals, other service activities, and the research studies.

In-Service Training

The weekly group sessions with instructional aides were continued, but became more structured. The focus was on the interaction between the aide and the student; project members made specific suggestions and conveyed to the aide the expectation that he

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*Progress Report, September 1, 1963 - August 31, 1964, NIMH 00843-02

was able to interact effectively. This approach seemed to work well, judging not only from the group discussion and participation, but also from spontaneous contacts with aides between sessions.

A systematic attempt was made to encourage the aides to personalize the students by becoming aware of individual differences and by developing a sensitivity to behavioral cues which reflect the feelings of a student. The group was encouraged to allow free communication of feelings even though actions related to them could not be expressed. Near the end of the series some resistance was encountered with a number of dormitory aides who were finding it difficult to listen comfortably to students expressing negative feelings about the school and/or staff members. Although not discussed, it was suspected that some of this discomfort was attributable to the fact that the increased closeness with students made the aides more aware of their identification with them. This seems to be an issue which must be faced if any far reaching changes are to be effected. However, as in therapy, such awareness must be worked out at a tolerable pace. A logical prior condition to such self-understanding was recognition that the behavior of the students could be altered by developing greater interpersonal skills on the part of the aides. Toward this end, the aides were encouraged to reward positive behaviors of the students by words and gestures.

At the beginning of the past year, the project conducted in-service training sessions only with one shift of aides in the dormitory housing boys in the regular program. During the course of the year, with some pressure from the teacher-adviser, a second group was started with another shift. For a period of about six weeks the project met weekly with every employee on the day and afternoon shifts in this dormitory.

There were a number of staff changes which had a direct effect upon the project. The dormitory head who had been responsible for beginning regular meetings with the aides resigned; her replacement has not indicated an interest in continuing the program.

During the latter part of the summer, plans were made to initiate training sessions with the instructional aides in the two Bordertown (public school) Dormitories in September. This was done at the request of the head of the dormitory who was transferred to this position from the regular program boys' dormitory where he had been the previous year. The new head of the boys' regular program dormitory, a twenty-year veteran of the BIA, has been receptive to the idea of working with the project but no specific activities were undertaken during this report period.

Case Referrals

The project has always been a resource for the referral of individual students who seem to require more service than the school normally offers. During the present report year

31 referrals were received, 20 of them from the school staff. The others came from ancillary agencies such as the U. S. Public Health Service Clinic which serves the school population, the United Pueblo Agency Welfare Division, and a social agency in a student's home community. During the first year of operation no students referred themselves to the project. In the second year, one student studied in the previous year returned for three interviews, and a boy whose sister had been studied in the current year referred himself.

Following is a table showing the source of referrals during the period September 1, 1964 to August 31, 1965.

USPHS Clinic		5
Social Agency		3
AIS Guidance Staff		19
	Instructional Aides	6
	Teacher-Advisers	9
	Department Head, Guidance	2
	Boys' Counselor	1
	Director of Guidance	1
Teacher		1
Registrar		1
Self-Referral by Student		2
TOTAL		31

The major problem for which students were referred was some type of depressive reaction, including suicidal gestures. The reasons for referrals include such descriptions as "feels that no one cares," "possible suicidal attempt," "boy depressed," "complains that he has nothing to live for." Another category of problem referred involves students with physical ailments. In some of these cases it seems that the project was being used to supplement the communication between the school clinic and the dormitory. Thus additional emphasis was given to the importance of administering medication, supervising children with prostheses, and giving special attention to youngsters making excessive use of the clinic with no observable problem.

Action taken on referrals varied. The most common approach was to consult with the staff person in immediate contact with the student and/or the supervisor of that staff

person. This was consistent with the philosophy of the project, namely, to develop skills in the permanent school staff. In five of the 31 cases referred to the project, the student was withdrawn from school before any action could be taken. In 26 cases some type of project activity took place. In three cases, a traditional complete case study was made : A Pueblo girl was evaluated at the request of a Bureau social agency considering an adoptive placement for her; an 18 year old Navajo boy in the boarding school program was given psychological tests and a psychiatric interview in an attempt to understand erratic behavior unusual for him and of concern to the staff; and the third complete case study was a younger Navajo boy in the Bordertown program who made what appeared to be a suicide attempt. In this case referral was made by the school clinic. In eight cases consultation with the staff by a project member took place without the student being interviewed. Fifteen of the students referred were seen by one or both of the project members at the school. Consultation with staff took place in all cases.

It is instructive to compare the referrals made during the present report period with those in the first year of operation of the project. A cursory comparison of the two years would suggest that the number of referrals to the project had decreased in the second year--35 referrals were reported in the first year of the project. The flaw in this comparison rests with the definition of what constitutes a referral. During the first year almost any mention of an individual student in any context was considered to be a referral, particularly if this mention was followed up with a persistent request for some kind of help. Though the first few referrals were of individuals who had relatively severe psychiatric disturbances, the bulk of the referrals involved behavior which caused difficulty in the management of the dormitories. As would be expected these came primarily from the instructional aides.

The 31 referrals mentioned in the present report were all formally made. Thus, the criteria for what constitutes a referral are considerably more stringent. Had the project used these same criteria the previous year, there probably would have been relatively few that would have been considered legitimate referrals. It is also clear that the nature of the cases referred is somewhat different in this second year. An analysis of these indicates that referral in these instances is clearly justified, and does not simply represent an inability of the part of the staff to handle a certain problem. The emphasis of these referrals seems to be a true difficulty on the part of the individual referred rather than a difficulty with the individual management of the student. This is a significant distinction.

It is necessary to make one last point. The in-service training had progressed with the instructional aides to the point that many cases were discussed which were not then actually referred to the project for more detailed workup. Similarly other members of the school staff took advantage of the opportunity to discuss particular problems that they had with certain students without necessarily going through the formal routine

of referral. Such consultations, of course, are not counted in the present report, yet it is safe to say that in terms of the day to day activities of the project that these probably constituted a high proportion of contacts with the school staff. Therefore, this count of 31 referred cases is only the barest indication of the number of students that were actually discussed and indirectly helped through informal consultation.

Other Service Activities

There were several instances of project-school collaboration during the year. The usual pattern was for a member of the project team to work with a member of the school staff on an individual basis. In one such instance counseling sessions with students were recorded and then reviewed by the project team member. There was another occasion when a series of consultations took place in connection with the relationship between a school staff member and a student.

A somewhat different type of project-school interaction occurred in the organization and leadership of what became known as "The Apache Club." One of the supervisory aides (assisted by another) began to meet regularly with the Apache students at the school and a more or less formal organization resulted. It was noteworthy in comparison to the other student organizations because discussion of individual and group concerns was made part of the goals of the organization. The activities included acquiring and making costumes and headdresses, tribal dancing, policing themselves to stay out of trouble, holding social events, as well as discussing problems. The effort on the members in lowering the incidence of problem behaviors was dramatic.

The project personnel attended these meetings and encouraged the sponsors to maximize student participation and discussion. The sponsors were given general support and encouragement for this activity.

It is clear that a genuine concern, interest, and acceptance can have a very beneficial effect upon the behavior of a group of students.

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

It has been possible to devote more time to research during the present report period. Two types of research endeavors may be delineated--evaluative and supportive. The purpose of evaluative research is to determine the progress and the outcomes of activities undertaken by the project team. The evaluative research undertaken thus far is descriptive and represents an effort to depict the development of the project objectively.

The second kind of research effort may be termed supportive because it refers to investigations which are designed primarily to answer questions which have arisen as a consequence of some of the activities of the project. This research normally requires special data collection procedures and can vary from relatively rigorous, purely experimental type of research, to the more loosely formulated observational type of research. As a matter of fact, the special projects contemplated as research support run the entire gamut.

Evaluative Research

Since the beginning of the project, members of the team have kept logs describing their daily activities at the Indian School. These logs, even though they are impressionistic, nonetheless constitute the basic data for the project. A coding system has been devised which will serve not only as a means of describing the course of the project over time but will also serve as a retrieval system making it possible to find specific incidents of a certain nature. The basic unit for the code is a contact which is defined as some kind of meeting or communication between a project member and some other party. The contact is classified in terms of its purpose, who was involved, and their status in the school organization. A single IBM card is made up describing each contact. To date over 1200 contacts have been coded. It is anticipated that data analysis for the log material will be conducted shortly. Different types of codes will be developed in order to answer different questions concerning other aspects of the course of the project.

Dropouts and "problem incidence" (memos concerning drunkenness, trips to the Detention Home, etc.) will be analyzed for all Apache boys in attendance during 1963-64. The popular opinion was that the Apaches were a much better group in 1964-65. There have been about 20 boys each of these two years with 13 boys common to both groups. Preliminary data analysis seems to indicate that the hypothesis of less trouble during the present report year.

Although it would be desirable to evaluate the effectiveness of in-service training directly, this work has not yet been started. A more inclusive study of dropouts and "problem incidence" is contemplated for the next report period. This, however, would be tenuously related to the in-service program and would require additional evaluation procedures to support any such inferences. It is anticipated that some semi-objective descriptions of group process during the meetings will be undertaken during the current year.

Supportive Research

The project staff and the unattached boys' counselor are collaborating in a study to determine the nature of problems perceived and admitted by students at the school.

A modified version of the Mooney Problem Check List consisting of 61 items has been administered to almost all ninth grade boys in the regular program and the Bordertown programs as well as to both boys and girls in the ninth grade in the Gallup Bordertown dormitory. This scale will also be administered to all the ninth grade students in the Gallup-McKinley school district in order to determine whether or not there are differences in numbers of problems and in areas of concern between different programs and different ethnic groups. Preliminary analysis shows that Bordertown students tend to check a larger number of items than students in the regular program (including more items dealing with discomfort in social situations) and that there were no real differences in the number or nature of problems checked between the Albuquerque Bordertown program (where the students signed their names) and the Gallup Bordertown program (where the students were anonymous).

After considerable trial and error experimentation, the project has pretty much discarded the traditional clinical case study model in describing significant life experiences and adjustment patterns of the school population. A beginning has been made in developing a new model. In this particular area the aid of consultants from the field of anthropology and social work has been invaluable. A limited amount of field work was done during the summer by the social worker who visited home communities and parents of a few students. These individuals are part of a group selected for intensive study on the basis of varying degrees of adjustment to the school situation as judged by school staff. To date, the consulting psychiatrist has interviewed nine students; the psychologist has tested seven; and the social worker has interviewed the families of ten in their home communities. In addition, the information gathered in the field is supplemented by an interview with the teachers and dormitory attendants at AIS who are in daily contact with the students.

The project became interested in the effects that knowledge that a particular student was at school under BIA Welfare had upon the expectations of the staff and coincidentally upon his actual behavior. The attitude seems to be that such a student would have more "problems." A sub-question which also arose in the process of investigating this was why students do come to the Albuquerque Indian School. Consequently, it was decided to investigate the students from a more or less confined area on the Navajo reservation to determine how many go to AIS and what considerations led to this decision. Also it was important to investigate the number of these who would be eligible to attend AIS under the social criteria because nearly all Navajo are admitted under educational criteria as a matter of course. After these students are discovered, it is hoped that by matching them with students from other tribes that some indication of the effects that the staff expectations have upon their behavior would be obtained. To date, only the record searching aspect of data collection has been accomplished.

A preliminary examination of the records of the Public Health Service clinic at the school suggested that the number of visits and types of complaints may be an index

of the incidence of emotional problems among the students in the school. It was hypothesized that because of the special attention given by the clinic staff some of the younger students tended to visit the clinic more often than necessary. Therefore, the records at the clinic for a portion of last year were examined in order to determine the distribution of number of visits and to see whether or not this distribution was related to sex and age. An attempt was also made to find out if clinic visits were associated with crises or especially significant incidents which may have occurred in the dormitory. To date, it is clear that there are some students who are frequent visitors at the clinic and who do not have physical justification for the number of visits which they make. It remains to be seen just exactly what the significance of these frequent visits might be.

Much of the difficulty in talking to the students is in fully understanding their meaning when they describe the things that are troubling them. It seemed appropriate to begin research in this general area by undertaking some psycholinguistic investigations. This involved first of all developing a dictionary in English of as many words as possible which refer to the expression of emotions and to a description of interpersonal relationships. These words were then evaluated by Navajo interpreters for the ease with which they could be translated into Navajo. It was found, for example, that approximately 70 per cent of the words could be readily translated into Navajo; however, 30 per cent could be translated only by distorting the meaning or could not be translated at all. This number seems sufficiently large to justify continuation of the study. Currently, an attempt is being made to evaluate the similarity of meanings of the translations and to determine whether or not there are cultural as well as linguistic differences in the interpretation and significance of emotional experiences. The hope is that ultimately a dictionary of words which can be used readily by counselors will be developed and consequently discussion of problems with students will be carried on with much more precision of meaning.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

This report period has been a transitional one. The broad outlines of the project had been drawn and rapport with the school staff had been established. This groundwork needed to be converted to a working relationship between school and project. By and large this was successfully accomplished. School and project staff developed mutual respect for one another out of the realization of a common interest in the students.

There have been two major characteristics of the report period covered by the present report: a) as it has evolved, the project and its activities are dependent upon individual and personal relationships; b) the activities of the project are a good source of research ideas.

The shifting in personnel and their assignments this year have been most instructive because it has illustrated quite clearly the extent to which the project relies upon individual relationships. Failure to have a permanent organizational status in the school means that the project is subject to school personnel and policy changes. The advantage is that flexibility is allowed in the activities of the project. Hence, it is in a position to help with the changes that do take place. By their informal status the project staff has helped others with such shifts without themselves being directly affected. The price of this is that the school has a blurred conception of the project, its roles, and activities. School personnel seem confused as to when, where and how to use the project staff. This is made difficult to dispell because the school setting is one in which the positions etc. are carefully classified and activities clearly described. This coming year will offer an opportunity to examine the efficacy of the informal organizational status.

There has been an effort during the present report period to realize the ideal of integrating a research support program with the actual mental health project. This is the kind of model which the project staff feels will ultimately be most advantageous in all mental health projects, and it is considered likely that this is the model that NIMH is most interested in encouraging. This was the first year in which one could say that the possibility of research became a reality. A role as helpers, non-critical persons had to be developed before attempting research. The Project staff is most optimistic about the opportunity and advantage of developing research findings along with the regular service functions.